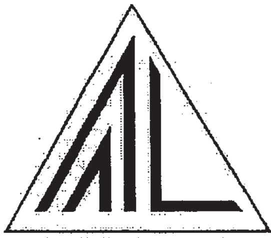

AUSTRALIAN ACADEMY OF LITURGY

AUSTRALIAN JOURNAL OF LITURGY

2004
Volume 9
Number 3

AUSTRALIAN ACADEMY OF LITURGY

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AUSTRALIAN JOURNAL OF LITURGY

Volume 9 Number 3 2004

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AJL is the journal of the Australian Academy of Liturgy and exists to further the study of liturgy at a scholarly level and to comment on and provide information concerning liturgical matters with special reference to Australia. *AJL* is published twice each year.

ISSN 1030-617X

Editorial

In this issue, we present texts from two papers presented last year, one by Randall S Lindstrom as a keynote paper at the Academy's conference in Sydney, and the other by Karen B Westerfield Tucker as the Austin James Lecture in Melbourne.

As a conference presentation, Randall Lindstrom's paper was accompanied by a set of projected images to illustrate the points being made. Alas, we cannot reproduce these here, but the text stands alone as a stimulating discussion of the themes visited during the Academy's 2002 and 2003 conferences.

Liturgists will be aware that 2003 was a significant year for Wesleyans, and Karen Westerfield Tucker's lecture is a timely reminder that, like many religious reformers, John Wesley was rather more irenic and respectful of church tradition than some of our contemporaries might imagine.

Academy members are now looking forward to the 2005 conference, to be held in Fremantle under the theme "Singing our sorrows", exploring the sometimes neglected role of lament in public worship.

As always, I look forward to receiving your contributions for future issues of *AJL*; and I wish you pleasant reading and nourishing worship.

Inari Thiel
Logan City

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Virtual Cathedral: a conversation between liturgy and technology

Randall S Lindstrom

The Church and Modernity

Computers in the choir stalls

The ancient and relatively constant tradition of Christian liturgy, joined with the always new and exponentially changing world of technology, can produce images of startling contradiction. Yet, there inevitably exists, between these strange bedfellows, a necessary relationship and, even, interdependency. With varying rates of acceptance, the church has employed, if not always fully embraced, advancing technologies. And, some would suggest that advancing technologies foster a greater need for spirituality. In his pre-millennium book, *Megatrends,* John Nesbitt predicts that a world becoming more "high-tech" will, of necessity, become more "high-touch".[1] Church growth, especially amongst fundamentalist Christian traditions in the US, and the burgeoning collection of books concerned with spiritual direction, self-care and body-mind-spirit connectedness offer the most obvious evidence in support of Nesbitt's belief. But, the natural tension between liturgy and technology — especially in practice — is very real. Such tension has many sources, including fear of the sacred becoming too secular, suspicion of technology's potential for artificiality, uncertainty and awkwardness in the practical application of technology to liturgy and, sometimes, a lack of imagination.

As with most points of contention, one's viewing position can be a key factor in overcoming the obstacles of fear, suspicion, uncertainty and frozen imagination. Often, in the midst of design projects, I encounter those same obstacles. The

[1] John Nesbitt, *Megatrends* (New York: Warner Books, 1984 reissue).

first such encounter occurred in architecture school. My professor — a seasoned and passionate teacher — could see frustration and paralysis setting in as I sat, labouring over the drawing board. He approached and asked that I stand, which I dutifully did. Then, he asked that I stand up on top of my chair, which I did, but only with great hesitation, knowing that, by then, the rest of the class was watching. "Now", he said, "have a look at your project from another perspective!" The exercise was embarrassing, but effective. Years later, as I watched a similar scene played out in the film, *Dead Poets Society*, the wisdom was reinforced and, to this day, I still occasionally stand on my chair. As we consider the issues of liturgy and technology, perhaps the church would do well to get up from its pews and, for a moment, stand on top of them.

Begin with this view of Fr Matthew Kelty, a Cistercian monk at Gethsemani Abbey:

> *"I suppose it will not be too long before we have a computer screen at each desk in choir, with some central station that will program an Odd Week and an Even Week, complete with hymns, psalms, readings and prayers. Then everyone — guests, too — will be certain to have the right page and correct text, all without need for natural light. And so, at Vigils, instead of the daylight of high noon, the soft blue light of video screens will suffuse the choir. There is really nothing particularly remarkable in this as an adaptation to choir stalls. Though in itself a marvellous achievement, it will be no more remarkable than a printed page replacing a hand-lettered one, nor more revolutionary than the introduction of books, which ended the days when monks knew the Psalter by heart. What <u>is</u> remarkable is that the choir of monks should be there at all. We, by familiarity, may be much unaware of the wonder we are witness to."*[2]

Fr Kelty paints a somewhat laissez-faire picture with regard to technology. He sees the practical advantage, as well as the ambient disadvantage and seems to acknowledge the inevitability of progress. But, his passion is for liturgy and the

[2] Rev Matthew Kelty, OCSO, "A Homily for the Solemnity of St Benedict," July 11, 1994, Abbey of Gethsemani, USA.

"*wonder*" of it. He sees technology as a means, not an end. In so doing, he offers a healthy approach to the subject.

Another teacher of mine — a flight instructor — offered an equally healthy approach to the subject of technology. As we entered an aeroplane for the first lesson and reached for our seatbelts, he said, "There are two kinds of pilots … those who strap themselves to the plane, and those who strap the plane to them. Accidents almost always involve the first kind. Which kind of pilot are you going to be?" He was, of course, talking about the relationship between the technology of an aeroplane, the activity it supports and the people who engage technology with activity. His message was that technology is not a playground for amateurs and users must remain the masters of it.

Technology in liturgy offers ample opportunities for both graceful flying and disastrous accidents. Today, there are liturgists and churches that seemingly view technology as an end, in itself, and there are those who effectively use technology as a means, even if selectively and cautiously. Of course, there are many that, as yet, do neither.

Sensory issues

Widely different and, usually, cautious approaches to technology probably stem from the fact that new technologies almost always ask us to *look* at things in a new and different way. More accurately, they ask that we *experience* things in new and different ways, not just through sight, but through all of the senses. Given that, we might expect technology and liturgy to be natural allies, since liturgy — especially in the more ritual traditions — has always been a multi-sensory experience, with stimuli for each of the senses … hearing, sight, smell, touch and taste.

If we overlay the sphere of our life's experiences with a sphere of stimuli for each of the senses, it has been suggested that the resulting conjunction is where we might find our imagination, our soul and what Rudolf Otto termed, "the numinous."[3] It is that special place where, in the presence of various stimuli, we remember, we commemorate, we celebrate, we feel and, perhaps, we pray.

As many in the Australian church would know, Fr Pat Negri, of Melbourne, is a priest, liturgist and artist. He regularly visits art museums and frequently enjoys observing the reactions of visitors as much the works of art. During a visit to the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, Pat approached a very large, abstract painting, beautifully executed with white paint on white canvas. The unusual work was simply entitled, "The Voice". Already viewing the painting were a mother and her young son. Pat listened as the mother said to the boy, "I can't *see* a voice in that, can you?" With a look of puzzlement and impatience, the boy replied, "Oh, Mum! You don't *see* a voice, you *hear* it!" Of course, he was right, and in the presence of the stimulus of paint on canvas, the son was able to *hear* a voice that his mother could not, because she was trying so hard to *see* it.

We have to be careful about compartmentalising our senses. Standing in front of a painting, we can neglect to listen. Listening to music, we can neglect to envisage. Integration of the senses should be our goal.

Technological advancement

At what cost?

In the Hollywood "docu-drama" called, *Inherit the Wind*, the story of the famous 1925 Scopes Monkey Trial is told, with more or less accuracy.[4] In this epic clash between creationists and evolutionists, actor Spencer Tracy portrays

[3] Rudolf Otto & John W. Harvey (translator), *The Idea of the Holy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958).
[4] Stanley Kramer, *Inherit the Wind* (©1960 Lomitas Productions Inc., Farmington Hills: CBS/FOX Video, 1985).

the famous defence attorney, Clarence Darrow, and at one point, makes a stirring speech to the jury:

> *"An idea is a greater monument than a cathedral, and the advance of man's knowledge is a greater miracle than all the sticks turned to stones or the parting of the waters. Are we to forego this progress?*
>
> *"Progress has never been cheap. You have to pay for it. Sometimes, I think there's a person who sits behind the counter and says, 'Alright, you can have a telephone ... but you lose privacy and the charm of distance. Alright, you may conquer the air ... but the birds will lose their wonder and the clouds will smell of gasoline.*
>
> *"Darwin took us forward, to a hilltop from where we could look back and see the way from which we came ... but for this insight and for this knowledge, we must abandon [a literal interpretation of] the pleasant poetry of Genesis."*

Sometimes, I think that there is also a person who sits behind the liturgy counter and says:

- Alright, you can eliminate the hazard of smoke and fire, but the flicker from your electric votive candles will be fake.
- Alright, you can have an overhead projector and screen, but the dignity of the liturgy will suffer its clutter and distraction.
- Alright, you can have the efficiency of fluorescent lights, but your church will look like an office, and your congregation will look sick.
- You can have a CD player in the church, but you'll give your congregation another excuse for not singing.
- You can employ the latest technology and techniques from theatre but, for a while, your churches may look like auditoriums.

- You can conquer the airwaves, but your congregation may experience more of the broadcast studio than the church.

- And, yes, you can grow your churches using the latest management and marketing techniques, but you might be accused of "dining with the devil."

Awkward transitions and phenomena

Whenever the church deals with modernity, there is a price to be paid. Any embrace of technology will cost money; some may require adjustments in worship style or form; many will attract criticism; and all may temporarily produce strange phenomena and awkward transitions.

Recently, a Melbourne priest, now in America, joined with an American nun to produce the first "movie lectionary" called, "*Lights, Camera ... Faith.*"[5] The first volume, featuring Cycle A readings was published in 2001. Cycle B was released last year, and Cycle C is due later this year. Each video matches some 75 films to the scripture readings for each Sunday in a format that places the film in dialogue with the scriptures. The producers maintain that the movie lectionary "involves the whole person in a process of theological reflection, using the popular culture of everyday life." This quirky integration of video technology and tradition is sure to be criticised by some, but can it really be dismissed? Fr Kelty might even be among those who would suggest that it is no more remarkable than the first printing and distribution of the Bible, which simply made the scriptures accessible in ways, theretofore, unheard of.

In the late 1950's when the technology was developed that first made Mary Martin "fly" on Broadway, as *Peter Pan,* the public was amazed and delighted. Thirty years later, when the same technicians installed the same technology for

[5] "It's lights, camera ... faith!" *Crosslight: From the Uniting Church in Victoria & Tasmania,* No.115 (September 2002), 16.

the first time in a church — permitting "angels" to "fly" — critics cried, "Kitsch", "Gimmicky", "Disneyland Spirituality!" Yet, each year when the Crystal Cathedral stages its para-liturgical pageants called "Glory of Christmas" and "Glory of Easter", hundreds of thousands of people, from many parts of the world, find themselves called to experience it ... not unlike the phenomenon of Germany's Passion Play. And, now, other large community churches around America are employing the same technology to heighten the stimulus of religious drama. At King of Glory Church in Atlanta, even Christ is "flown" in a dramatic re-enactment of *The Ascension.*

The American "megachurch" has been the quickest to embrace current technologies in its often unorthodox brands of liturgy. Most have state-of-the-art facilities for sound, light, projection and production. Most are understated in religious symbol and imagery. But, attendance is extraordinarily high, liturgies are energetic, congregational singing is strong and enthusiastic, teaching and preaching are effective. At most of these churches, the sphere of liturgical stimuli collides in a highly responsive way with the congregation's respective spheres of life experience. The sustainability and depth of the resulting faith is, however, yet to be measured.

At Elmbrook Church, in suburban Milwaukee, Wisconsin (USA), a debate took place during the design of their new 3500-seat church, as to whether or not a pipe organ should be purchased. Budgetary limitations were the primary consideration. There was no question, however, that the budget would support a sophisticated dual screen, rear-projection system. At a meeting of the building committee, when the issue of the pipe organ was at its most contentious, one member relieved the tension with a tongue-in-cheek suggestion that in lieu of a real pipe organ, *images* of pipes could be projected on the screens whenever the electronic organ was being played! Ultimately, fiduciary concerns prevailed

and an electronic instrument was installed ... but, to my knowledge, no images of pipes have ever appeared.

In his book, "*Dining with the Devil,*" Os Guinness soundly attacks the megachurch movement for its acquiescence and compromise with modernity.[6] Yet, in America, significant church growth, at least in recent times, is found primarily in this movement. Such churches offer a highly socialised and personalised form of religion, and a highly popularised form of liturgy. They offer the "high-touch" kind of spirituality that John Nesbitt saw as the antidote to a "high-tech" world. Their success certainly attracts criticism, but it also demands serious consideration. In their present form, the technology of "production" often seems to dominate the liturgical environment. But, perhaps, the movement represents a transition that will, ultimately, lead to a more refined form in which technology and liturgy are made seamless. In the meantime, the clumsiness of the present form may be the price to be paid for liturgy's flirtation with technologies of the day.

Tradition *vs.* "New" Technology

Everything new is old again

I seldom find Christians, in the pew, viewing Christianity as the radical, anti-cultural, anti-establishment movement that is its genesis. Perhaps that is why many charge Christianity with being too easy, too comfortable and too unchallenging. Perhaps that is one why fewer and fewer young people are attracted to it. Perhaps that is why so many, in the church, view "traditions" as having been always present, instead of realising that every tradition was, at some point, new and different; many radically different and often unaccepted at their introduction. In the comfort of once new and different, but now older and

[6] Os Guinness, *Dining with the Devil: The Megachurch Movement Flirts with Modernity* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1993).

accepted, "traditions", elements of the Christian church view much of the "new and different" as antithetical to Christianity.

Consider the following critical comments about a technological advancement once embraced by the Church:

- *"The appearance cannot but be displeasing to the eye of everyone who has any idea of propriety and proportion."*
- *"Natural imbecility! It ought to be exiled from judicious eyes."*
- *" ... a congestion of dark, monkish piles without any just proportion, use or beauty."*
- *"Its spirit is ... savage, grotesque, rigid and redundant."*

These comments are typical of the original response to Gothic architecture, some put forth as late as the 19th Century.[7] Gothic architecture was a radical, revolutionary and daring experiment in structural technology. It was architecture's "radical best" in response to bishops who sought taller and bigger monuments of faith and power. Through its pointed arches and flying buttresses, cathedrals rose to heights never before achieved, walls were made lighter, windows were made larger and interiors were made brighter than ever before. But the experiment required a departure from the dark, comfortable and, by then, "traditional" Romanesque style. By the early 20th Century, the Gothic style was labelled: "*The most perfect and only appropriate style for church buildings*." Only a few years ago, the School of Architecture at the University of Notre Dame, in America, adopted as policy the teaching of classical architecture to the exclusion of all other "styles", thereby denying at least one hundred years of architectural development.

From time to time, through architecture and structural technology, the church has continued to experiment. Between the World Wars, in Germany, the church was among the earliest examples of steel and glass structures. After the wars, with greater advances in steel technology, Le Corbusier was able to "fake" an effect that had not before been possible. His pilgrimage chapel at Ronchamp, France, appears to be fluidly, but solidly, constructed of poured concrete. In fact, its frame is steel, with a concrete "shell" ... a sophisticated and complex version of papier-mache. The technique allowed him to construct the roof plane, free of the walls and separated by a narrow and almost eerie slot of glass, such that the roof appears to "float" or "hover". The visual weightiness of the building is relieved, while at the same time, a sense of mystery is created as to how the roof is actually supported. He has been praised and criticised for it.

Twenty years later, attention had turned away from steel in favour of the new technologies available in concrete. Gottfreid Böhm, and many others, took advantage of the advancements to build manneristic and sculptural buildings ... amongst them, churches. His pilgrimage church at Neviges, Germany, is of a scale and monumentality that rivals any of the great Gothic cathedrals.[8]

By the late 1970's, the structural advancement of space-frame technology was sweeping the architectural world. Able to span great distances without support and with relatively little weight, it permitted light and lacy structures. The technique seldom found use in churches, except at the Crystal Cathedral, in suburban Los Angeles, designed by noted architect Philip Johnson, one of the "fathers" of the modern high-rise. The 3000-seat "cathedral" is clad entirely in glass, but is cooled and ventilated without any mechanical systems ... a technological feat equal to the structure, itself, and made possible by new types

[7] Paul & Tessa Clowney, *Exploring Churches* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982), 62.
[8] Randall S. Lindstrom, *Creativity and Contradiction: European Churches Since 1970* (Washington, DC: AIA Press, 1988), 58, 125.

of glass that maintain light and visibility while reflecting 97% of the sun's rays. In that project, Johnson was challenged to his "radical best."

In the realm of religious structures, the most bold experiments in the past century and beginning of this one, however, have been confined to "special", high-visibilty projects. Though the architecture of parish churches has always produced a compendium of noteworthy results, the average congregation rarely challenges architects to their "radical best". And, it would be perfectly fair to ask, "Why would they?" The average parish is not, after all, the seat of power and money that produced the churches we now call "great."

Today, new church design continues to struggle between what is seen as "modern" and what is seen as "traditional." The issues, however, are primarily stylistic, not technological, and anything but consistent in their interpretation. New churches built at the same time, with, fundamentally, the same structural system can result in vastly different liturgical environments. Modern architectural and structural technology can be used to create the orthodoxy sought by a conservative synod of the Lutheran Church or respond to the reforms of post-Vatican II Catholicism, with equally positive response from the users.

By and large, the new "cathedrals" are not being built for religious organisations, but rather for commerce and, sometimes, government. In those corridors of confidence, power and financial strength, architecture is often challenged to its "radical best." Happy marriages of new technology and environment often result. In the late 1980's, the United Airlines Terminal at O'Hare International Airport, explored bold, new approaches to the design of steel and glass, and sparked a world-wide re-evaluation of transportation facilities that, ever since, have attempted to revive the excitement of travel by

returning terminals to the glory days of grand railway stations. Other factors of modern travel are, of course, proving to be at odds with that aspiration.

At the lower level of the United terminal, two concourses — some 800 metres apart — had to be connected, underground, for passenger transit. The result could have been little more than a bland and boring corridor, as is so often the case at airports. Instead, architect Helmut Jahn sought the collaboration of the Disney Corporation's "imagineers" to explore the limits of new technologies that might make the space and the experience radically different. In a multi-sensory orchestration of space, form, light, sound and movement, this people-moving space is a constantly changing, three-dimensional kaleidoscope. Travellers, not least children, delight in the space and, in advance, hope that their connections will require them to traverse this concourse.

Likewise, in facilities for government, we can see the same movement. Whether in the State of Illinois Building, in downtown Chicago, or in the newly redeveloped parliament building, in Berlin, designers pushed to their limits are defining space in radically different ways, with the newest technologies. But, the source of their inspiration is not new technology; rather, it is "tradition" ... the tradition of the great rotundas of classical government buildings. In such cases, technology is being used to preserve and expand tradition, not destroy it.

In the world of art, similar observations can be made. There was a time when the technique of perspective was a radical, new concept in art. The notion of constructing vanishing points to make two-dimensional objects and scenes appear more three-dimensional was unheard of. Similarly, there would have been a time when the notion of carving bits of stone or wood, out of a large block, to produce a three-dimensional object was novel, if not radical.

While we still marvel at the beauty and grace of Michelangelo's "*Pieta*", technology is constantly merging with the arts to form new media. In recent years, the hologram has challenged our thinking and our senses by producing startlingly realistic, three-dimensional objects and scenes that only exist by virtue of light. Though many are more detailed than the most sophisticated sculpture, your hand could pass through them all. At the Sydney Museum, I have observed young people mesmerised by the combination of video, audio and holographic "sculptures" that allow early settlers of Sydney to literally "tell" their stories. Central to liturgy and devotion is story telling. As I watched those youngsters, I imagined them sitting near a hologram of Mary, or Mary MacKillop, or Martin Luther King Jr., as each related personal stories. I was moved by the potential.

The notion is not altogether foreign to the church. At Coventry Cathedral, the Stations of the Cross have been produced in holographic form. What new meanings, what new depths, what new challenges might accrue from new and radically different marriages of tradition and technology? What opportunities are we missing as we contemplate the question?

An abbreviated history of technology in liturgy

Throughout history, technology has found its way into liturgy, but many of the items that are, today, considered "traditional" were actually quite slow to enter the church. It took six centuries after the legitimisation of the Christian church before the secular pipe organ began to appear in churches. Candles, for liturgical and devotional use, only appeared early in the 12th century.[9] In the middle of the 12th century, we find the first Gothic structures. As we know, seating — in the form of chairs or pews — was not common in churches until the Reformation. These inseparable components of what we currently define as

[9] Paul & Tessa Clowney, *Exploring Churches* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982), 28.

church environment were, by no means, a part of its genesis. Such technology "evolved" in the church by a natural process of scepticism, introduction, acceptance and, finally, embrace ... sometimes to the point of fanatical obsession.

As might be expected, the last century brought new technologies to liturgy at a more rapid rate. At its beginning, we see the introduction of electric lights. Steel and glass began to appear in churches around 1928.[10] Live radio broadcasts of worship services began in the 30's and 40's. With that technology — and talking motion pictures — came sound reinforcement systems for auditoria and churches. The electronic organ entered the church in the 40's and, in a quick line of succession, led to the synthesiser. Live television broadcasts of religious services began in the 50's and gave birth to the phenomenon of the "televangelist." In the final years of the 20th century, with full enculturation of the ubiquitous computer, we find the church introduced to better sound systems, light-dimming systems, data projection, and in embryonic form, holography and fibre optics. Development of computer capabilities continues to expand, advancing the potential of lasers, surround-sound and the more mind-boggling multi-sensory technologies. Such potential prompts questions about their possible application in the church, offering prospects that are exciting, frightening ... and inevitable.

[10] Hugo Schnell, *Twentieth Century Church Architecture in Germany* (Munich: Verlag Schnell & Steiner, 1974).

Technology and Integrity

Authenticity: The pipe organ as case study

One of the most common criticisms of new technologies is one that I have used many times in defence of my own "purist" tendencies. It is that new technologies lead us away from the original, tempt us to stray from the true thing, and result in the artificial or superficial. At least in the case of silk flowers, I maintain the accuracy of that criticism! But, I am also reminded of how extreme and unreasonable we can sometimes be in holding to such defences.

Ten years ago, I was involved in the design of a large, new chapel for a very conservative seminary of the Lutheran Church in America. The orthodoxy of the denomination allowed for nothing other than a cruciform floor plan for the chapel. A graceful, but conservative, cross-shaped plan was produced to the committee's unanimous approval. Budgetary constraints, however, eventually required a reduction of floor area, which in the case of a cruciform plan, meant shortening the leg of the cross. When I presented the revised plan to the committee, all were in agreement except for Dr Nagle, an Australian theologian. With a look of sincerely-held doubt, he asked, "With this shortening, has the cross become too 'squat?'" I replied that the cross remained sufficiently well-proportioned, but added that I would hesitate to shorten it any further, because we were approaching the disproportion that Dr. Nagle feared. Still unconvinced, Dr Nagle spoke again: "Jesus taught us to *flee* from fornication, not to venture as close as possible!" Laughter gave way to financial reality and the cross remained in its slightly shortened form.

With all due respect and proper trepidation, I take the example of the organ to further explore the issue of integrity and authenticity in technology. The organ

is generally accepted as the "king of instruments", especially for use in church environments. It is also the source of varying levels of "purism." There are those who scoff at anything without pipes and there are those who scoff at anything with pipes, but without direct mechanical action. The modern synthesiser is usually the most easily dismissed, although that, too, is beginning to change.

The organ, of course, did not begin as the organ. It began as the flute; a pipe filled with human breath. At some point, such instruments were bundled in a variety of descending lengths to become what we call pan-pipes. With the invention of hydraulic technologies to produce greater air pressure than the human lung, larger bundles of larger pipes could be built. Eventually, it was discovered that manipulation of pipe materials, shapes and the air that entered them, could produce a variety of different sounds or voices including strings, horns and trumpets. Thus began the march toward synthesised sound. Bellows replaced the hydraulics and subsequently, motorised blowers were introduced. Through technological advancement the modest flute grew into the grand instruments that bring us almost as much visual delight as musical. They became as integral to church as the structure and the liturgical furnishings ... and frequently were more dominant. Further technological advancement brought the electro-pneumatic pipe organ. With it, the keys and pedals no longer had to be physically attached to the valves of the pipes. Instead the keys and pedals triggered electric switches that opened the valves. Playing the organ became less physically demanding and, for the first time, the console could be separated from the pipe cases, permitting greater flexibility. Of course, the superiority and authenticity of the mechanical action organ is still advocated by some.

So, the organ we know, today, is a highly evolved instrument; the result of on-going technological change, although sound is still produced by air moving through a pipe. But, now, technology starts to cloud the issue. The invention of the electronic organ, developed only last century, began a separate and accelerated path of technological advancement in keyboard instruments. As a result, we see sophisticated hybrid instruments that use a familiar console to control both pneumatic pipes and electronic speakers in unison. With this development, churches unable to afford the full complement of voices they need, or without space for the 16- and 32-foot pipes that might be required, can achieve such voices by much more affordable and compact electronic means. With the computer, came the ability to digitally sample — not record — actual instruments and recreate them with uncanny accuracy. Even the most traditional pipe organs, built today, include "MIDI" technology that permits interface with remote computers and other future technologies. As a complement to hybrid and electronic organs, a small box that sits on top of the console can add hundreds of new, accurately reproduced voices at little cost and without need for renovation to either the instrument or the space around it. And, of course, in its purely electronic form, the synthesiser keyboard has become a compact, state-of-the-art instrument, in its own right ... using the most advanced technology to create the sounds that musicians and listeners want to hear.

Perhaps seen with the greatest scepticism is the technology that now allows these instruments — including newly built pipe organs — to be played, not by human beings, but by computer control. Digital technology allows each and every action of a human player to be stored, electronically, and re-entered into the instrument such that each key and each pedal is struck and held in exactly the same way, and with exactly the same pressure as the original human artist. In effect, it is the technological advancement of the player piano and leads to

comical scenarios of the church organ being played by a phantom organist. The thought is new, strange, startling and unsettling, but for hundreds of years, so was the thought of introducing the exclusively secular organ into the sacred environment of the church.

If such digital technology had been available a few hundred years ago, and could have sampled and stored — not just made an audio recording of — the playing of Bach, Beethoven or Mozart at their keyboards, which of us would not sit, mesmerised, at seeing and hearing the keys and pedals played exactly as these masters played them? Yet, if we imagine the church organist pre-playing the Sunday hymns on electronic disc so that the organ could play them — live — exactly as he or she would have, on a Sunday when the organist is unavailable, many find it unimaginable. Our scepticism comes not because the scene is technologically impossible, but more because we have neither dealt with the possible shortcomings, nor embraced the possible benefits to the church … a church frequently beset by lacklustre music programs. History suggests that we will, inevitably, deal with it.

In the continuum of technological advancement, marking the line of authenticity can be difficult at best … and usually depends on which chair we happen to be standing.

Authenticity: the liturgical symbols

The liturgical symbols pose even more treacherous grounds for exploring the issue of authenticity. As with silk flowers, I maintain a purist's stance with regard to electric votive candles. Under no circumstances should electricity be artificially forced to "flicker." Nor should the simple and functionally beautiful light bulb — an object made of glass — be forced into the shape of a flame … an ephemeral form produced by fuel and oxygen.

Light, as a symbol, is central to Christianity and its liturgies. *Light* is the symbol, not the fuel that produces it. Sometimes the church acts as if wax — a latecomer to liturgy — were the symbol. Over time, and in some sectors of the church, the wax candle, was given an overlay of symbolism: that of sacrifice, dying and being consumed. But, light — the light of Christ — remains the intended symbol. The candle, too, was once new technology. People discovered, and slowly introduced ways for it to be used in liturgical practice. With an emphasis on candles, daylight becomes an often forgotten symbol of light, though the most obvious, powerful and only natural one. All other symbols for light are artificial, beginning with the candle. It is undeniably compelling, as is all fire, and provides an almost timeless means of symbolic conveyance. Today, however, we are increasingly presented with other forms of artificial light, some the result of advancing technologies.

In the new interfaith sacred space at Dandenong Hospital, regulations prohibited open flames of any kind ... whether fuelled by wax or natural gas. The suggestion from hospital administrators was, of course, electric "flicker" bulbs. New technology, in the form of fibre optics, however, offered another choice. Simply set into a deep stainless steel frame, the tips of just eighty fibres provide a symbol of light and infinity, which not only satisfied regulations, but also has become a popular focus of prayer and meditation for people of every faith.

When the world watched the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney, the sight of Cathy Freeman lighting the flame — in the midst of water — and its rise to the cauldron was as liturgical as any church service. At the closing ceremony, when fireworks illuminated Sydney Harbour, one of the most frequent reactions by observers was that the experience had been "almost spiritual" ... the games had ended.

Every evening as dusk settles over Epcot Centre, in Florida's Walt Disney World, there is a gathering. People of every ethnic origin, every age and every physical ability, stop whatever they are doing and assemble — willingly and with great anticipation — around the shores of its central lake. Though not necessary, they gather in near silence for a celebration of the day that fills the air with music and the sky with light. The most powerful symbol of light comes in the form of computer-orchestrated lasers, precisely synchronised and integrated with the music. Upon leaving, people appear enchanted, fulfilled, even contemplative ... the day has ended.

Each night, at the unabashedly secular Crown Casino, in Melbourne, people stop and stand or sit, spellbound, as huge gas brigades are fired and light up the sky in a most dramatic way. It is a stunning visual experience, but also a tactile one, since the heat of the flames can be felt even through the glass of nearby restaurants and bars.

Despite the casino's garishness, visitors are also transfixed by the creative use of water in its main lobby, where pools and computer-controlled fountains interact with light and music to form a kinetic sculpture that captures the imagination. And, no one seems to worry about the potential for drowning, or the growth of algae ... as they do if a flowing baptismal font is suggested for the parish church.

At the nearby riverside esplanade, children delight in interacting with a playful, cooling and computerised fountain that demands to be fully and actively engaged, not just observed. And, I continue to be amazed at how often the commercial, secular world celebrates water in more convincing ways than does the church.

There are artists today who are prepared to engage new technologies with the same creativity as others might approach paint or marble. A recent work at the National Gallery, in Canberra, was installed not in the museum building, but in the garden. The medium was mist ... the authentic article, not a theatrical fog machine. Amongst the trees, pathways and pools, an ever-changing and mysterious fog — created by the artist — moves over the ground, sometimes obscuring sight, sometimes beckoning further exploration. The participant sees, feels, smells, tastes and — with its movement through the leaves — even *hears* the water in its "mist-ical" form. How often can we make that claim about the role of water in our churches?

In each of these cases, many of the symbols we know to be liturgical are used with abundance, exuberance, extravagance, enthusiasm and honest portrayal of what they are. The technologies of conveyance — gunpowder, gas, electricity, fibre-optics, lasers, pumps, condensers, computers and digital controllers — are unimportant. In the relationship between technology, art and liturgy, the church just might be offered meaningful new ways of engaging our traditions and, perhaps in the process, ways of engaging new generations who so readily accept, and expect, the incorporation of technology in the course of their lives.

Technology and the Generation Gap

The fear most often expressed in connection with the church reaching out to young people is that of having to "dumb-down" the church in a rush to attract youth on the slippery slope toward pop culture. Inherent in that fear is a bit of condescension toward our young people, since it implies that we "smarter" adults might need to become "dumber" in order to engage younger generations. Yet, we know that young people, today, are offered a scope of education

unknown to previous generations. Perhaps, if anything, they are expected to learn too much, too quickly and under too much pressure. Perhaps what we expect them to *know*, in school, fails to reconcile with what we expect them to *believe*, in church. Sometimes, perhaps we just prefer to think we know more so that we can retain a sense of control ... real or not.

I am reminded of a true story involving a young mother who, in addition to being an author, also conducted therapeutic art courses for adults. One day her seven-year-old daughter asked, "Mummy, what kind of work do you do?" Her mother replied, "Well, I teach adults how to draw." Puzzled, the daughter paused for a moment and replied with another question: "You mean ... they *forget*?"

Whatever the causes, the decline of youth interest in church is of paramount concern in most sectors of western Christianity. The position of Youth Minister is the fastest growing staff position in American churches. At the inaugural conference of the International Network of Children's Ministry in 1980, just 35 children's ministers attended. At the same conference, last year, attendance exceeded 2,500. There are corresponding experiments — some seemingly radical — to revive youth interest in organised religion. Some such experiments involve the use of technology. More and more churches are engaging "high-tech" set-design companies to do Sunday-school makeovers that include state-of-the-art interactive playgrounds and surround-sound cinemas. Other ministries, like Olive Baptist Church in Pensacola, Florida, are employing "low-tech" means. There, every Sunday, the youth minister holds a youth class outside, in the rear car park, where young people skateboard in and leave the same way. Both approaches point to the importance of using elements of children's culture as vehicles for spiritual nurture.[11]

[11] Nadya Labi, "The New Funday School," *Time* (23 December 2002), 44-46.

The computer and all of its kindred technologies permeate the lives of our young people and they approach those technologies with the same sense of nonchalance as previous generations approached the typewriter and adding machine. My generation and those ahead of me are coming to learn and understand the computer, at varying rates and with varying degrees of success. Generations that follow me were born with it and wonder what all the fuss is about. The relationship between technology, the church and the generations, raises the prospect that, at least at a subliminal level, some sectors of the adult church have been slow and sceptical to engage advancing technologies because we know those technologies to be more the realm of the younger generations. If the adult church were to more fully engage emerging technologies, might it not risk losing an element of control over the very generation it professes to seek? In the church's longing to "pass on the faith", as it has been passed before, might it be passing over some of the most effective and relevant means with which to do so?

The Future

In more than twenty-five years of observing and assisting virtually every denomination of the Christian church, as it implements change, I have consistently witnessed one truth. The Church — and to a large extent, society as a whole — is most adept at describing what it has been, less adept at stating what it currently is and often incapable of defining what it expects to be. Our state of post-modernism sometimes seems to be a place of limbo, where we rely on past references to define the present and avoid, where possible, the need for vision. The future can be a frightening prospect and some visions for it are not

necessarily encouraging, but we do have a role in it, either proactively or reactively.

A recent Australian theatre production provides, perhaps, a small glimpse of what technology holds. The "Back to Back Theatre Ensemble" consists primarily of actors who are considered to have an intellectual disability, so their work begins in the realm of the marginalised. In the ensemble's production of "SOFT", traditional attitudes toward environment, sound and lighting were pushed well out of the mainstream and into their own margins. Descriptions are not indicative of the experience, but are worth examining:

> ***Environment*** — *"This space incorporates the potentiality for SOFT architecture. Over an eighteen month conceptualisation period, with the ensemble, the set developed as an inflatable capsule, enclosing the participants and serving as an active surface for digital projections and lighting."*[12]
>
> ***Sound*** —*"The sound system design for SOFT represents a significant departure from traditional sound delivery practice. Each participant is supplied with an open-ear headphone-surround mix, which functions as the primary soundfield. The entire seating bank is situated within a secondary soundfield, comprised of eight speakers arranged as a vector diffusion ring in conjunction with a sub-woofer system located underneath the seating bank."*[13]
>
> *"The concept of providing individual headphones to an entire [assembly] fulfilled my desire to embrace new technologies in an age where entertainment choice has exploded. As a designer, I am intently aware that contemporary audiences possess increasingly sophisticated listening skills. As theatre competes with film, DVD and gaming experiences, audiences are demanding similar production values in [other settings]. Room shaking bass, moving sound and crisp vocal definition are essential components, all of which have to be delivered within a framework that is intrinsic to the goals of the work."*[14]
>
> *"The audio content for SOFT examines genetics from the perspective of current scientific debate. The work began with a finite number of*

[12] "Soft" (playbill), Back to Back Theatre Ensemble, Geelong (Victoria), Australia.
[13] ibid.
[14] ibid.

> *samples. All content was generated from these building blocks. Tiny slices of this content are manipulated to create new meaning. Elements replicate and time is rearranged."*[15]

Those who participated in SOFT *lived*, for an hour, in the margins of intellectual disability. We did not simply observe or hear the margins as portrayed by actors, because the experience was more total than that. It was multi-sensory — as physical as it was visual — and despite our seated posture, we were full, active and conscious participants.

Aspects of SOFT's technological descriptions are almost unintelligible to the average reader, who still may struggle to program a VCR at home. Yet there is a genre of rising contributors who not only understand, but feel passionate toward emerging and revolutionary concepts, like these, in diverse fields of endeavour. Even more such passionists will emerge from the next generations of young people. And the fact remains that most of those young people have a better and more sophisticated sound system in their bedrooms, than most parishes have in their church buildings. The language can sound esoteric and irrelevant to the church, but the generation that the church is attempting to reach is learning it, talking it, doing it and making careers in it.

The production of SOFT and many other technological efforts, today, move toward the realm of virtual reality. In a sense, the march has been a long and on-going one. The pipe organ is an elementary form of virtual reality when it uses the technology of a flute to produce the sounds of other instruments, particularly non-wind instruments. Early experiments with what we now call virtual reality involved the "Sensorama" of 1962. Like computers of the day, it was a bulky and clumsy piece of equipment. Today, NASA's virtual reality experiments involve equipment the size of headphones, goggles and gloves,

[15] Ibid.

allowing the virtual participant a heightened level of reality. Experience tells us that technology will only get smaller as results become greater.

A producer of video art, Bill Viola, uses fascinating word pictures to describe his version of virtual reality, which he calls, "Dataspace." He says:

> "*We can see the seeds of what some have described as the ultimate recording technology — total spatial storage, with the viewer wandering through some three-dimensional, possibly life-sized field of pre-recorded or simulated scenes and events evolving in time.*"[16]

Viola associates his notion of dataspace with architectural spaces that have been constructed over the ages to record cultural history, from Greek temples to Gothic cathedrals. He describes such monuments as "memory palaces" and suggests that the personal computer is the next evolutionary step, by which ancient models of memory and artistic expression can be reborn through information technologies.[17]

Since religion has always involved the realm of memory, art and symbol, the notion of virtual reality, or dataspace, might seem a natural ally. But, in its striving for a reality that does not exist, perhaps it draws too close to re-enactment, rather than symbol. It is difficult to imagine a gathered assembly of churchgoers, individually equipped for the communal act of liturgy. But, the notion begs a stream of questions. Are we willing to look beyond what presently seem to be the limitations of advancing technologies? Are we fully envisaging the potential of liturgy in the future? Can technology be used to enhance traditions and ensure their future, rather than destroy them? Instead of using technologies to "dumb-down" religion, could the church find itself at the cutting-edge, using it to help re-ignite the challenge that Christianity is meant to

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[16] "Multimedia: From Wagner to Virtual Reality," retrieved via *Internet*, 15 December, 2002, *http://www.artmuseum.net/w2vr/contents.html*
[17] ibid.

present, on the fronts of social justice, human relationships, ethics and morality? Will technology be part of some kind of wake-up call to the Church?

It seems possible that advancing technologies, properly integrated with liturgy, could elevate our awareness and invoke our engagement of Christian life in more challenging and confronting ways. In the future, one can imagine that "proclamation" could be expanded, as it already has with the use of drama in some churches, to include other experiences — other "virtual realities" — that stir the soul and call the Christian community to action. What if emerging technologies, like virtual reality and those that follow, allow us the opportunity to live prejudice, experience poverty and understand depression and desperation in more "real" ways than most of us presently know them? More importantly, what if these technologies could be used to help us realistically envisage an alternative future, such that the fears and anxieties usually attached to proposed social change can be allayed and hopes built, instead? What if technology could assist us in breaking down the barriers between denominations and faiths, leading not to conformance, but some universal sense of shared and equal spirituality? Might the Church, again, challenge designers and technologists to their "radical best", as it once did?

The answers, of course, are not knowable; but nor will the questions go away. Liturgy needs to continue its conversation with technology and expect increased tensions and incongruities ... but it should also expect some fascinating opportunities.

John Wesley and the *Book of Common Prayer*

Karen B Westerfield Tucker

For decades, John Wesley had avoided the temptation to separate the Methodist societies from the Church of England. But by 1784, he faced the reality that there were upstart Methodists in the newly created United States who were on the verge of establishing their own church. As a means of maintaining his authority over matters Methodist, Wesley took the extraordinary step of ordaining Richard Whatcoat, Thomas Vasey, and Dr. Thomas Coke for pastoral leadership, and sent them to America with his revision of the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer* entitled the *Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America. With other Occasional Services*. Two years later, in 1786, the service book was slightly revised and published in two editions, one for use in the "United-States of America" and the other for "His Majesty's Dominions". Wesley's *Urtext* served as the basis of subsequent ritual formulations for Methodists in North America and Britain, and in their missionary or colonizing offshoots across the globe, though the Wesleyan – and Prayer Book – ancestry is not as obvious in some places as it is in others.

Wesley's revision of the Prayer Book in 1784 was not done randomly. Although he viewed the book as unequalled in its "solid, scriptural, rational Piety," its contents were not above improvement.[1] As early as 1736, while a priest in Georgia, he showed a willingness to "revise [the] Common Prayer",[2] and in the essay "Ought We to Separate from the Church of England?"

[1] Statement dated 9 September 1784 found as a preface in most extant copies of the *Sunday Service*, and printed in *The Works of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.*, vol. 14, ed. Thomas Jackson (London: Wesleyan Methodist Book Room, 1872; repr. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1984) 303-304.

presented in 1755, he expressed his dissatisfaction with specific components of the Prayer Book, such as sponsors in baptism, the office of confirmation, the absolution in the visitation of the sick, the thanksgiving in the burial office, and the Athanasian Creed on account of its "damnatory clauses".[3] Wesley's revision brought to bear these prior concerns and what he knew of the liturgical practices of Christian antiquity, the English liturgical debates of his own and the previous centuries,[4] and what he surmised to be the American situation. Thus when the time arrived to produce a liturgical resource for the Methodists, Wesley had several agendas. Apparently one of those agendas was to put the "common" back into "Common Prayer". Wesley's concern for *common* prayer deserves closer examination, especially today in light of current controversies regarding the feasibility of prayer in common in ecumenical settings.

I. The English context for common prayer

The English Reformation, and the technological revolution in mass printing that it utilized, gave a range of meanings to the concept of common prayer. At that time, the phrase "common prayer" was virtually synonymous with the liturgy of the hours, and this notion is certainly carried over in the full title of Cranmer's work as *The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church*. But the older meaning was, perhaps unwittingly, expanded by the production of a single book that contained services and prayer resources for daily worship, eucharist and baptism, and pastoral offices – all dependent upon the "pure word of God" and written "in such language and order, as is most easy and plain for the understanding" (Preface, *Book of Common Prayer*, 1549). Indeed, from early on, English writers referred to the entirety of the work simply as the "Prayer Book". A

[2] Diary, 5 March 1736, *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. 18, ed. W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater (Nashville: Abingdon, 1988) 363.
[3] "Ought We to Separate from the Church of England?" *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. 9, ed. Rupert E. Davies (Nashville: Abingdon, 1989) 571-72.

unified collection of liturgies in a single volume had the benefit of restoring a broader notion of common prayer typical of the apostolic church which "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers" (Acts 2:42). Morning and evening prayer, sacramental rites and occasional services were linked as prayers in common requiring in all aspects the presence and (albeit sometimes limited) the participation of the people. To this end, the Prayer Book was made available to the people for corporate and domestic use. Either gathered in the assembly or at home in their "closet", persons at prayer were inexorably connected to the wider church, thereby giving tangible testimony that they shared a "common faith" (Titus 1:4; see also Ephesians 4:5) and thus a "common salvation" (Jude 3).

The common prayer book was intended as well for political purposes in uniting a liturgically diverse island officially, if not spiritually, by means of a "uniform quiet and godly order" (First Edwardine Act of Uniformity). The assumption was that "all good people desiring to live in Christian conversation" would share texts in common (see Acts 2:44) in a manner "profitable to the estate of [the] realm" (Second Edwardine Act of Uniformity). The commonality of prayer (*koine euche*) and faith and life would define the English nation as a Christian community (*koinonia*) before God and the world. But dissent marred this ideal from the outset, with persons desirous of a more Catholic approach agitating on the one side, and those intent on a more "purified" Protestant direction clamouring on the other. The legal actions of uniformity in succeeding generations only intensified the disputes as to whether the Prayer Book was or could be – in the broadest sense – the common prayer of the nation. Liturgy and politics – ecclesiastical and, in national churches, civil – are

[4] Karen B. Westerfield Tucker, "John Wesley's Prayer Book Revision: The Text in Context," *Methodist History* 34 (1996) 230-47.

bedfellows more often than not; and in England, their combination militated against a liturgical consensus.

Read from the underside, the history of the Prayer Book in England has been the story of (failed) attempts to reach the reformation goal of establishing a truly common prayer for the nation's church. From the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, there were persons in each generation who championed the production of a comprehensive book that allowed for liberty of conscience and set forward honest *common prayer*. The alternative, the mere toleration of those who exempted themselves, was evidence that the *Book of Common Prayer* was not what it purported to be. "We are for making true Religion as National and extensive as may be; and for a National Church", noted the seventeenth-century nonconformist Richard Baxter.[5] "And if a Form of Liturgy in Prayers, Praise, Psalms, be imposed by Agreement or Authority . . . let it not be made a Snare for Contention and Division, by the rigorous urging of needless things".[6] Efforts were made in 1688-1689 by designated committees within the Church of England to produce a revised prayer book that addressed concerns in Latitudinarian and "Puritan" directions, but it came to naught.[7] In 1749, an anonymous collection of essays primarily associated with John Jones, vicar of Alconbury, was published that advocated revision of the Prayer Book to complete the "reformation" of the Church and advance Christianity in England. Among the suggestions made in *Free and Candid Disquisitions* were the relaxation of absolute uniformity since religion did not require it, and the elimination of those ceremonies that prevented union between "professors of the

[5] Richard Baxter, *The English Nonconformity, As under King Charles II and King James II. Truly Stated and Argued*. 2d ed. (London: Printed for Thomas Parkhurst, 1690) 15.
[6] Ibid., 236 (from the "Breviate of the Ten Articles").
[7] See Timothy J. Fawcett, *The Liturgy of Comprehension 1689*, Alcuin Club No. 54 (Southend-on-Sea: Mayhew-McCrimmon, 1973) 1-46.

same religion and subjects of the same government".[8] In this way, the people of England would be united "in sacred as well as in civil concerns".[9]

II. Wesley and the common faith

Wesley knew Baxter's work, including his *Reformation of the Liturgy* submitted as part of the deliberations leading to the 1662 Prayer Book, and also the anonymous *Free and Candid Disquisitions*. The latter Wesley read in August, 1750 and regarded as well written but problematic, particularly its suggestion that private individuals should take up liturgical revision if the Church of England's Convocation did not do so. "Who would supply us with a liturgy less exceptionable than that which we had before?" queried Wesley.[10] As if in answer to his question, numerous ritual texts soon appeared in print, joining liturgical revisions published decades earlier, among them the liturgical experiments by William Whiston (*The Liturgy of the Church of England, Reduc'd Nearer to the Primitive Standard*, 1713) and Thomas Deacon (*A Compleat Collection of Devotions*, 1734) that were designed to return the worship of England to what was supposed to be an early Christian configuration. Some of the unofficial prayer book revisions that emerged sought to mediate a comprehensive common prayer, while others took up language consistent with England's emerging interest in Arian and Unitarian theologies.

Despite his hesitation in 1750 to endorse full-scale unofficial revisions of the Prayer Book, Wesley was not reticent in his critique of the book and, as noted earlier, by 1755 had put into writing his complaints regarding certain prayers and actions, many of which echoed the concerns registered by non-conformists

[8] *Free and Candid Disquisitions Relating to the Church of England and the Means of advancing Religion therein. Addressed to the Governing Powers in Church and State; and more immediately directed to the Two Houses of Convocation* (London: Printed for A. Millar, 1749) 8-12, 240-41.
[9] Ibid., 222.

almost a century before. This he observed in a letter written in late 1755 to Samuel Walker:

> Those ministers who truly feared God near an hundred years ago had undoubtedly much the same objections to the liturgy which some (who never read their works) have now. And I myself so far allow the force of several of those objections that I should not dare to declare my assent and consent to that book in the terms prescribed.[11]

Wesley also recognized that many of these objectionable liturgical matters fell under the category of adiaphora, externals that were irrelevant to true religion, that sadly had caused the suffering of some English Christians from the advent of the Prayer Book.[12] In addition, the Prayer Book's enforcement by acts of uniformity had the dire consequences of depriving persons of home and livelihood "because they did not dare to worship God according to other men's consciences".[13] In Wesley's opinion, the Church ought to take another route.

As early as 1742, Wesley proposed that the "character of a Methodist" could offer an example of a more generous alternative to the current tensions within the Church of England. Because they believed Scripture to be "the only and the sufficient rule both of Christian faith and practice" and Christ to be "the Eternal Supreme God", Methodists, like other Protestant Christians, in Wesley's opinion, were different both from the Church of Rome and from the anti-trinitarian Socinians and Arians. But Methodists were, however, not to be distinguishable from other "real Christians of whatsoever denomination they be" should those persons uphold the "common, fundamental principles of Christianity". And in those "opinions which do not strike at the root of Christianity", Wesley posed that persons "think and let think", that the

[10] Journal, 15 August 1750, *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. 20, ed. W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater (Nashville: Abingdon, 1991) 357.
[11] Letter to Samuel Walker, 20 November 1755, *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. 26, ed. Frank Baker (Oxford: Clarendon, 1982) 612.
[12] Journal, 13 March 1747, *The Works of John Wesley*, 20:163.

Protestant Christian community in England be "in no wise divided among ourselves" and thus keep "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace".[14] Among those essentials "at the root of Christianity", Wesley in the 1740s and throughout his life identified: the three-in-one God, the origin and goal of humankind; the redemptive work of Christ and its appropriation by the power of the Holy Spirit; the condition of human sin, the divine gifts of repentance and forgiveness, and opportunities to receive justifying, sanctifying, and perfecting grace; and the fruits of faith, demonstrated by works of piety and mercy.

The approach to "think and let think" carried over to the liturgical life of the church, as Wesley noted in a sermon from this same period. Rites and ceremonies, while they had value and could be useful, were not ends in themselves nor had they intrinsic worth: "they are good in their place, just so far as they are in fact subservient to true religion".[15] This same theme was broached in a 1750 sermon on the "Catholic Spirit" that took issue with how forms of worship had become unnecessarily divisive, fracturing the English church and causing discord more widely among the various Christian bodies. "Difference in opinions or modes of worship may prevent an entire external union, yet need it prevent our union in affection?"[16] Such a question is significant, because as Wesley observed, "it must needs be that as long as there are various opinions there will be various ways of worshipping God; seeing a variety of opinion necessarily implies a variety of practice".[17] Variant liturgical forms and expressions, therefore, should not constitute a barrier between Christians; mutual respect on the differences of externals should prevail.

[13] "Thoughts upon Liberty," 17, *The Works of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.*, vol. 17, ed. Thomas Jackson (London: Wesleyan Methodist Book Room, 1872; repr. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1984) 39.
[14] "The Character of a Methodist," sections 1, 17, 18, *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. 9, ed. Rupert E. Davies (Nashville: Abingdon, 1989) 32-42.
[15] Sermon, "The Way of the Kingdom" I.4, *The Works of John* Wesley, vol. 1, ed. Albert C. Outler (Nashville: Abingdon, 1984) 219.
[16] Sermon, "Catholic Spirit," 4, *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. 2, ed. Albert C. Outler (Nashville: Abingdon, 1985) 82.
[17] Ibid., 85 (I.8).

> I do not mean, "Embrace my modes of worship", or, "I will embrace yours". This also is a thing which does not depend either on your choice or mine. We must both act as each is fully persuaded in his own mind. Hold you fast that which you believe is most acceptable to God, and I will do the same. . . . I believe infants ought to be baptized, and that this may be done either by dipping or sprinkling. If you are otherwise persuaded, be so still, and follow your own persuasion. It appears to me that forms of prayer are of excellent use, particularly in the great congregation. If you judge extemporary prayer to be of more use, act suitably to your own judgment. My sentiment is that I ought not to forbid water wherein persons may be baptized, and that I ought to eat bread and drink wine as a memorial of my dying Master. However, if you are not convinced of this, act according to the light you have. I have no desire to dispute with you one moment upon any of the preceding heads. Let all these smaller points stand aside. Let them never come into sight. "If thine heart is as my heart", if thou lovest God and all mankind, I ask no more: "Give me thine hand".[18]

Yet such charity was not to suggest an apathy toward "public worship or the outward manner of performing it". Wesley was certainly against what he termed a "practical latitudinarianism". Neither did he intend to suggest a "speculative latitudinarianism" or an indifference to all opinions, because conformity was expected on the "main branches of Christian doctrine", the "first elements of the gospel of Christ".[19] The catholic spirit, also termed "catholic love", was to be characterized by both a wide generosity and an accountability to scripture and primitive Christianity.

That Wesley republished this sermon on "Catholic Spirit" twice more during his lifetime indicates the importance its propositions held for him. With the 1755 publication, a synopsis in verse by Charles Wesley was appended at the sermon's conclusion:

[18] Ibid., 89-90 (II.2).
[19] Ibid., 92-93 (III.1-2).

Weary of all this wordy strife,
These notions, forms, and modes, and names,
To Thee, the Way, the Truth, the Life,
Whose love my simple heart inflames,
Divinely taught, at last I fly,
With Thee, and Thine to live, and die.

Forth from the midst of *Babel* brought,
Parties and sects I cast behind;
Enlarged my heart, and free my thought,
Where'er the latent truth I find,
The latent truth with joy to own,
And bow to Jesu's name alone.

Redeem'd by Thine almighty grace,
I taste my glorious liberty,
With open arms the world embrace,
But *cleave* to those who cleave to Thee;
But only in Thy saints delight,
Who walk with God in purest white.

One with the little flock I rest,
The members sound who hold the Head;
The chosen few, with pardon blest,
And by th'anointing Spirit led
Into the mind that was in Thee,
Into the depths of Deity.

My brethren, friends, and kinsmen these,
Who do my heavenly Father's will;
Who *aim* at perfect holiness,
And all Thy counsels to fulfil,
Athirst to be whate'er Thou art,
And love their God with all their heart.

For these, howe'er in flesh disjoin'd,
Where'er dispersed o'er earth abroad,
Unfeign'd, unbounded love I find,
And constant as the life of God;
Fountain of life, from thence it sprung,
As pure, as even, and as strong.

> Join'd to the hidden church unknown
> In this sure bond of perfectness,
> Obscurely safe, I dwell alone,
> And glory in th'uniting grace,
> To me, to each believer given,
> To all Thy saints in earth and heaven.[20]

John Wesley published his *Explanatory Notes on the New Testament* also in the year 1755, and that volume provided another forum for him to speak regarding the Christian unity achievable by a catholic spirit.[21] In the Preface to that work he wrote:

> Would to God that all the party names, and unscriptural phrases and forms, which have divided the Christian world, were forgot: and that we might all agree to sit down together, as humble, loving disciples, at the feet of our common Master, to hear his word, to imbibe his Spirit, and to transcribe his life in our own!

His comments upon Matthew 5:47 continued in the same vein:

> Our Lord probably glances at those prejudices, which different sects had against each other, and intimates, that he would not have his followers imbibe that narrow spirit. Would to God this had been more attended to among the unhappy divisions and subdivisions, into which his Church has been crumbled! And that we might at least advance so far, as cordially to embrace our brethren in Christ, of whatever party or denomination they are!

John Wesley's avowed concern for the unity of the church in England was expressed throughout the rest of his life in the various genres in which he published, including the hymns. Numerous hymn texts, written mostly by brother Charles, addressed, directly and indirectly, the subject of the catholic spirit, with emphasis placed on the kinship of believers united by "one Lord, one faith, one baptism" that they believed exemplified the apostolic church.[22]

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[20] Entitled "Catholic Love," the hymn is cited from G. Osborn, *The Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley*, vol. 6 (London: Wesleyan-Methodist Conference Office, 1870) 71-72.
[21] John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes on the New Testament*, 16th ed. (New York: Phillips & Hunt, n.d.; Cincinnati: Walden & Stowe, n.d.)
[22] See, for example, the hymn entitled "Primitive Christianity" in *Hymns and Sacred Poems*, 1749.

On a smaller scale, the simple adjective "common" scattered throughout the hymns – "common Lord", "common Saviour", "common salvation", "common bliss" – testified to the existing fellowship of the local community and to the longed-for full *koinonia* of believers in Christ.

III. Wesley and common prayer

Wesley's commitment to Christian unity and his willingness to question the contents of the Prayer Book may have prompted Methodist John Fletcher to propose to Wesley in 1775 that he consider undertaking a revision of that disputed tome. Wesley, in a catholic spirit, and striking a *via media* between Anglicanism and Reformed positions, could set forward a comprehensive revision that might be suitable for official adoption. Fletcher wrote to Wesley:

> What if with bold modesty you took a farther step towards the reformation of the Church of England? The admirers of the Confessional, and the gentlemen who have petitioned the Parliament from the Feathers' Tavern, cry aloud that our church stands in need of being reformed; but do not they want to corrupt her in some things, while they talk of reforming her in others? Now sir, God has given you that light, that influence, and that intrepidity which many of those gentlemen have not. You can reform, so far as your influence goes, without perverting; and, indeed, you have done it already. But have you done it professedly enough? Have you ever explicitly borne your testimony against all the defects of our Church? Might you not do this without departing from your professed attachment to her? Nay, might you not, by this means, do her the greatest of services?[23]

Such optimism was perhaps unrealistic given the widespread suspicion of the Methodist movement and Methodism's penchant for "enthusiasm". But it is possible that Fletcher's comments may have deepened Wesley's resolve almost ten years later in 1784 to revise the Prayer Book along lines that could garner the greatest theological and liturgical acceptance without abandoning or compromising the "common, fundamental principles of Christianity".

[23] Letter of John Fletcher to John Wesley, 1 August 1775, *The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.*, vol. 8, ed. Nehemiah Curnock (London: Epworth, 1916) 331-32.

Wesley's Prayer Book revision of 1784 was principally characterized by omission, with the removal of problematic components and repetitions, such as multiple rehearsals of the Lord's Prayer and creeds in a single liturgical event.[24] All of the orders were shortened, thereby satisfying a widespread criticism. He expunged the Athanasian Creed, Psalms and parts of Psalms considered "highly improper for the mouths of a Christian Congregation", the sanctoral (cycle of saints' days) as "at present answering no valuable end", and readings from the Apocrypha, although two verses from Tobit managed to survive in the Lord's Supper's offertory sentences. Those matters in the Prayer Book that he identified in 1755 that he "did not undertake to defend" – sponsors in baptism, the office of confirmation, the absolution in the visitation of the sick, the thanksgiving in the burial office – all disappeared; in fact, the entire "Order for Visitation of the Sick" was dropped as well as the rite for private baptism. Removed also were sung liturgical texts, priestly absolutions, the wedding ring – the list could continue. Wesley did make some alterations: for example, the liturgical officiant is designated as "minister", "elder", or "deacon", and not "priest"; and references to baptismal regeneration are reduced but not totally removed. Some new components were added, most notably, rubrics allowing for extemporary prayer, even at the occasion of the Lord's Supper, the celebration of which Wesley expected every Lord's Day.[25] Surprisingly, no rubrics or instructions for hymn singing were introduced. In some cases, Wesley's revision appears to be unique in its liturgical adjustments, such as the removal of the giving away of the bride from the marriage rite.

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[24] The most widely available reprint (with critical notes) of the *Sunday Service* is published by the Order of St. Luke.

[25] Letter to "Our Brethren in America", 10 September 1784, *The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.*, vol. 7, ed. John Telford (London: Epworth, 1931) 239.

Wesley's *Sunday Service of the Methodists* was an offence to many Anglicans and Methodist sympathizers, including his brother Charles.[26] Nevertheless, Wesley's handiwork achieved a level of comprehension unattained in earlier unofficial revisions. Numerous "Puritan" issues were addressed, but not all;[27] and Wesley's advocacy of the Lord's Supper every Lord's Day, for example, would have struck a note with those of Laudian and even Non-Juring sensibilities. By establishing a theological and liturgical middle ground with his prayer book, and by allowing for some degree of flexibility, Wesley may have hoped that prayer in common – centred on the essentials established from scripture and the primitive church – truly could be achieved. And by this common prayer, the church could most fully establish, express, and fulfil its identity as church.

The year after the publication of the *Sunday Service* and Wesley's irregular ordinations, Wesley indirectly defended his actions, and declared his uncompromised position as a member of the Church of England, in the sermon "Of the Church". To do so, he defined the Church of England in broad, comprehending terms that, to his mind, were "according to the doctrine of the Apostle": "It is that part, those members, of the universal church, who are inhabitants of England. The Church of England is that 'body' of men in England in whom 'there is one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith', which have 'one baptism', and 'one God and Father of all'".[28] Wesley argued that it was the essentials that defined the *koinonia* of the church and not what he deemed peripherals: "Whoever they are that have 'one Spirit, one hope, one

[26] See Charles's versified criticism in S. T. Kimbrough, Jr. and Oliver A. Beckerlegge, eds., *The Unpublished Poetry of Charles Wesley*, vol. 3 (Nashville: Kingswood, 1992) 97.

[27] Frederick Hunter, in his *John Wesley and the Coming Comprehensive Church* (London: Epworth, 1968), claimed that comprehension was Wesley's revisionary goal by following a Puritan agenda (pp. 57, 90). Yet the evidence is clear that Wesley did not follow a strict Puritan line and, in fact, kept many things abhorrent to the Puritans but appealing to the other side.

[28] Sermon, "Of the Church," 17, *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. 3, ed. Albert C. Outler (Nashville: Abingdon, 1986) 52.

Lord, one faith, one God and Father of all', I can easily bear with their holding wrong opinions, yea, and superstitious modes of worship".[29] Indeed, the church was to be found where brothers and sisters strove to keep and realize Christian unity:

> the true members of the church of Christ "endeavour", with all possible diligence, with all care and pains, with unwearied patience (and all will be little enough), "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace"; to preserve inviolate the same spirit of lowliness and meekness, of long-suffering, mutual forbearance and love; and all these cemented and knit together by that sacred tie, the peace of God filling the heart. Thus only can we be and continue living members of that church which is the body of Christ.[30]

IV. A Wesleyan approach to common prayer?

If, as Wesley suggested in 1785, "true members" of the church of Christ are called by definition to work for that unity for which their Lord prayed, the church has made significant, though imperfect, strides in the last hundred years toward reconstituting itself. Yet today, the possibility of prayer fully in common and with it the most complete unity – as *communio in sacramentis* or *communio eucharistica* – remain a distant hope. Indeed, discussions at the end of last year in the World Council of Churches' Central Committee regarding the "Framework for Common Prayer" included in the Final Report of the Special Commission on Orthodox participation in the World Council of Churches demonstrated how far the churches have come and how much farther they have yet to go. The final sentences of the opening paragraph of that document laid out the problem concisely: "Our common prayer is also a sign of those things that are still to be achieved. Many of our divisions become apparent precisely in our common prayer."[31]

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[29] Ibid., p. 52 (19).
[30] Ibid., p. 55 (27).
[31] See Paragraph 1, Appendix A "A Framework for Common Prayer at WCC Gatherings," "Final Report of the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC," *The Ecumenical Review* 55 (2003) 18.

Although there are some Orthodox who would appeal out of a Cyprianic ecclesiology to the admonition of the thirty-third Laodicean Canon (4th century) that "no one shall join in prayers with heretics or schismatics", others would locate such canons in a specific historical context and (cautiously) recognize today that some degree of prayer in common may be possible among those who hold to and celebrate the same faith.[32] Orthodox theologian and liturgist Paul Meyendorff observed:

> Christians who are not Orthodox are not simple pagans, and ecumenical organizations are not merely secular institutions. Some degree of unity clearly does exist, and the basis for this unity is explicitly affirmed in the constitutions of councils of churches, whether national or international, and is expressed in our common baptism. And if some degree of unity does exist, then ought it not to find some expression in common worship, which can affirm both the limited unity that already exists and contain prayers that full unity may be achieved, in fulfillment of the Lord's command that all may be one?[33]

Almost thirty years before, Reformed theologian Jean-Jacques von Allmen made a similar appeal for a common prayer born from a fundamental unity of belief – with the prospect of a fuller unity in worship and life:

> Are our divisions so deep as to prevent us from praying together because we are persuaded that we are not praying to the same God, through the same Christ and in the same Spirit? And if they are not, if they do not prevent us from praying together, then what are we waiting for in order to measure, not the depth of our divisions, but their flimsiness – which must be broken through and eliminated, in order that every local Church may gather *epi tô auto* ["in one place"] to address God *homothymadon* ["with one accord"]?[34]

If, therefore, there is some measure of agreement that *communicatio in sacris* is to some degree possible, that prayer in common may, in fact, be offered when beliefs are held in common, might it be appropriate – particularly in this tercentenary of his birth – to turn to the "principles" employed by John Wesley

[32] See Constantine Scouteris, "Common Prayer," *The Ecumenical Review* 54 (2002) 33-37.
[33] Paul Meyendorff, "Ecumenical Prayer: An Orthodox Perspective," *The Ecumenical Review* 54 (2002) 30.

in his efforts to provide and promote a common prayer in his own time and apply them to our own?

First, common prayer may be achieved in conjunction with the true, clear, and full expression of the "common, fundamental principles of Christianity." More than once in his writings, Wesley articulated this simply as belief in "one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one God and Father of all"; the basis of agreement of the fellowship of churches affiliated with the World Council of Churches is similar in its simplicity with its confession of "the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures" and the intention to "seek to fulfill together [a] common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit". In his teaching, his worship, and his life, Wesley strove to lift up and perpetuate the catholic faith known from scripture and handed down from the first three centuries. Here was the norm by which Christians and churches were to be judged, including his own. Recognition of those common, deep truths – the "one Lord" and "one faith" – in the other was sometimes a difficult task for Wesley, who in his sermon on the "Catholic Spirit" attempted to make a gesture of love and respect toward Roman Catholics and Baptists. By the "fundamentals", a goodly use of reason, and evangelical experience, Wesley judged what was necessary for inclusion in his revision of the Prayer Book, and what was either improper or unimportant.[35]

Second, common prayer may be achieved when the essentials are distinguished from the nonessentials. Wesley acknowledged that many disputed rites and ceremonies fell into the category of adiaphora because they were not necessary for salvation or for true worship. These nonessentials proved a hindrance to

[34] Jean-Jacques von Allmen, "The Theological Meaning of Common Prayer," *Studia Liturgica* 10 (1974) 135.
[35] See Letter to Henry Brooke, 14 June 1786, *The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.*, 7:333. In some instances, Wesley dropped sound material, but not on theological grounds: his removal of the Nicene Creed, for example, was done to address the practical problem of that symbol and the Apostles' Creed both being used in a conjoined service of Morning Prayer and Lord's Supper.

many and, in his opinion, little was lost by their removal since they served no valuable end, and, more negatively, they often detracted from or substituted for the "inner religion", the "religion of the heart". Inner religion, according to Wesley, did not consist in outward formalities, but in "the knowledge and love of God, as manifested in the Son of his love, through the eternal Spirit", which led to "every heavenly temper and to every good word and work".[36] Thus what was essential was worship in spirit and in truth that stood against spiritual idolatry and the mere "form of godliness". Such a position allowed for ritual flexibility while maintaining the central theological core.

Third, common prayer does not mean liturgical uniformity, for such will never be possible. Wesley recognized, quite rightly, that "as long as there are various opinions there will be various ways of worshipping God". The history of the church has shown this to be true, even when regulations enforcing uniformity have been decreed. Unity in liturgical practice has never been the norm; in fact, diversity has been the reality from apostolic times onward. Thus common prayer should not mean a single, inflexible design for prayer or one particular understanding of prayer, but rather that which gives voice to the essentials of the Christian faith in a variety of forms, though those forms may possibly follow a commonly recognized *ordo* or pattern.[37] Mutual respect of the kind Wesley articulated in his sermon on "Catholic Spirit" should be evident in the journey toward a fully common prayer. A person who embraces "catholic love", says Wesley:

> loves as friends, as brethren in the Lord, as members of Christ and children of God, as joint partakers now of the present kingdom of God, and fellow-heirs of his eternal Kingdom, all of whatever opinion or worship or congregation who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; who love

[36] Sermon, "Spiritual Worship," III.4, *The Works of John Wesley*, 3:99.

[37] On a mutually-recognized ordo, see Gordon Lathrop, "Knowing Something a Little: On the Role of the Lex Orandi in the Search for Christian Unity," in *So We Believe, So We Pray: Towards Koinonia in Worship*, ed. Thomas F. Best and Dagmar Heller, Faith and Order Paper No. 171 (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1995) 38-48.

> God and man; who, rejoicing to please and fearing to offend God, are careful to abstain from evil and zealous of good works.[38]

Finally, common prayer is tied to the quest for unity. Wesley's revision of the Prayer Book was not just a liturgical resource for the people called Methodists; it was also a method for comprehending the scattered Christians of England and of the recently independent United States. Others – including those designers of the Prayer Book for what would become the Protestant Episcopal Church in America – recognized its value as a comprehensive text that could bridge differences between Christian factions. Prayer in common, coupled with catholic love, could help to bring deeper recognition of the sharing of one Lord, one faith, one baptism. "Happy is he that attains the character of a peacemaker in the church of God", announced Wesley.[39] Although Wesley's *Sunday Service* did not survive intact for long in America, Wesley's insistence on preservation of the essentials in worship did, and enabled Methodists in America to make a lasting impression on that nation. In Britain, the affinities between Wesley's service book and the *Book of Common Prayer* encouraged conversations between Methodism and Anglicanism, but numerous barriers have stood as obstacles to ecclesiastical unity. Perhaps to a limited extent Wesley was successful in putting the "common" back into common prayer.

Prayer together in one place or prayer for each other in different settings, when of one accord as *common* prayer, may help bring to birth the *koinonia* long sought by the people of God. A hymn stanza by Charles Wesley may thus be both proclamation and hope:

[38] Sermon, "Catholic Spirit," pp. 94-95 (III.5).
[39] Sermon, "On Schism," *The Works of John Wesley*, 3:69.

Come, let us who in Christ believe
Our common Saviour praise,
To him with joyful voices give
The glory of his grace.[40]

[40] *A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People called Methodists, The Works of John Wesley*, vol. 7, ed. Franz Hildebrandt and Oliver A. Beckerlegge (Oxford: Clarendon, 1983) 330 (#200); originally from *Hymns on God's Everlasting Love.*

Book Reviews

Alice P. Matthews. *Preaching that Speaks to Women.* Forward by Haddon W. Robison, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003. 188 pages.

I was interested in reviewing this book, though not entirely looking forward to it. As a teacher of homiletics any good book is a help, and even mediocre ones can offer insight. As a male clergyman from a lectionary worship tradition it was always going to be a bit daunting to review the work of a female author from a US free tradition bible based church on preaching to women. The risk was worth taking.

Matthews treats seriously women as hearers and as full members of the church. She also takes seriously the contemporary world, especially in its postmodern guise. This is not a conservative anti-feminist tract seeking a retro church. Across ten chapters the author takes us into discussions of the differences between men and women, gendered approaches to moral decision making, empowering women to psychological wholeness, women's ways of knowing, the modern and the postmodern, spirituality, power, leadership and roles. She happily distinguishes between the biological sex-body and the socially constructed gendered body. Her specific interest in the differences between men and women is to enable women to be addressed fully and fruitfully in their own right.

Each chapter has two movements. The first concentrates on the major contemporary developments. In Chapter Three on psychological wholeness we are offered the results of studies on the psychological differences between men and women, touching on stress, self esteem, depression, communication and stereotyping. The second part of the chapter asks how we can apply these insights to preaching, both touching on the real needs of women and undoing

the damage of current stereotypes. The writer's aim throughout is to engage whoever is preaching to women (the vast majority of worshippers) in reflection about the gospel impact of what they say and how they say it.

The book has a number of helpful features. It is well written, highly accessible, jargon free but amply footnoted. As well each chapter has a concluding set of summary points supplemented by questions to ponder, making it suitable for group discussion with seasoned preachers and apprentice preachers of all stripes.

— *Gerard Moore*

Strieder, Leon F. *The Promise of Obedience: a ritual history.* A Pueblo Book. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2001. ISBN 0-8146-6016-9

The author has reworked his doctoral thesis, completed under Anscar Chupungco, into this insightful book. It is interesting from a number of perspectives.

Strieder offers a review of the promise of obedience in the Roman Catholic ordination ceremony across the centuries. He opens with descriptions of the promise of obedience in the ordination rites of Eighth century. Early discussions here revolve around that unusual Roman custom of the pope granting a leading bishop the 'pallium'. The second chapter charts the development of the promise of obedience through the medieval period leading up to Trent. Chapter Three throws up something of a relief: an examination of the vow of obedience in the monastic and mendicant rules, and the mutual interaction between ordination rites and induction into the religious life. Chapters Four and Five take up the reforms of Vatican II and the 1990 revision of the Roman rite. Again these are seen against the rites of the Eastern Church and the Eastern Catholic Churches in Chapter Six. The work is brought to a

conclusion in Chapter Seven. This final chapter is perhaps the most useful place to start reading the book since it gives a good overall summary. When wading across the marshlands of old liturgical texts it is easy to get a bit lost.

What is there to be found? The writer does a good job identifying the ritual moments in history. As well, he gives a limited but insightful commentary on how promises of obedience had very different meanings. They could allow for pastoral freedom, help bypass local political difficulties, or represent a more authoritarian approach. Strieder shows again how the Roman rite is really a hybrid, taking rites and forms from the cultures in which it was celebrated. He also reminds us how the rites worked, in the main, to connect the one ordained to the church, rather than so directly to the bishop. At the same time he offers insights into how the rites of ordination could be further reformed. Yet his deliberate focus is with the rituals and the prayers themselves, so the theological and pastoral exploration is necessarily limited.

I would have liked an appendix which had the rites and prayers in isolation together, along with a diagram showing the families of rites and their interaction. That would have made the work more accessible.

— *Gerard Moore*

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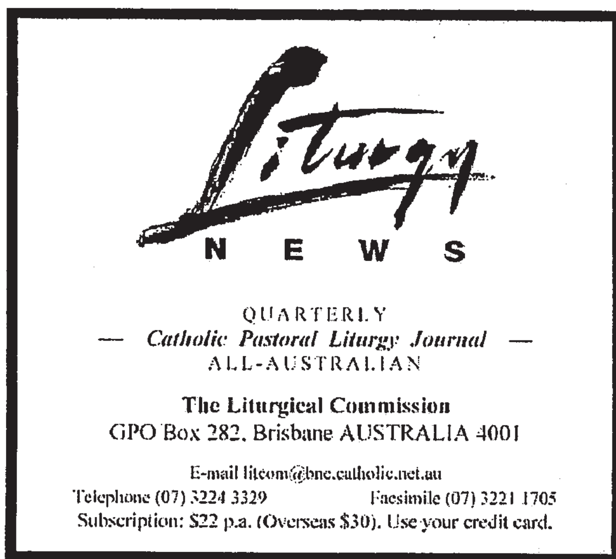

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